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OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES

Research and Analysis Branch

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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THE MEANS OF INFLUENCING PUBLIC OPINION IN HUNGARY

Description

Position of Press in Hungarian political life, enumeration and evaluation of the more important newspapers and periodicals. Organization and influence of Radio in Hungary.

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SUMMARY

In contrast to the situation existing in other Axis countries, the Hungarian newspapers represent various political opinions and parties. The government has several means, however, for keeping the newspapers in line: right of suspending and banning them, censorship, a "press fund" for subventions. Nevertheless press developments in recent months show increasing cooperation between the opposition parties and increasing influence of Count Bethlen. The Hungarian public is well-informed about events outside Hungary, partly through the press, partly through the radio; listening to foreign broadcasts is very frequent.

The Hungarian Press is centered in Budapest. There are local newspapers in all larger towns and communities, but none of them is of political significance. At the moment, the Hungarian Press may perhaps be considered as the most interesting in Europe. It publishes reports about events from all over the world, and in contrast to the political uniformity forced upon the press of totalitarian and occupied countries, it contains lively political discussions, as the various newspapers represent differing shades of political opinion. This general picture of the Press does not truly reflect the predominant position which the government and the government party actually hold in political life, but gives the impression of a much freer and more varied political situation than exists in reality.

The impression that the press is independent and that it engages freely in debate is deceptive. Although the newspapers represent different political trends and views, the government has various means of keeping them under control and in line. The Minister of the Interior has the right to ban or to suspend any publication thought injurious to the government or the national cause. Furthermore, a censorship board has been introduced, in which each ministry has its representative, and to which material must be submitted before publication. Moreover the government can compel the publication of speeches and statements by Cabinet Ministers and other members of the government "in a prescribed way." The government, furthermore, is in possession of a large "Press Fund," in the use of which it is not accountable to parliament. It is quite customary in Hungary for the newspapers

to receive state subventions; even the Social Democratic organ "Népszava" is thought to receive a large one. Besides, the Hungarian Telegraph Bureau (Magyar Tavirati Iroda), through which the press is provided with news, is an official Agency.

The most important Hungarian newspapers are:

Esti Kurir

Afternoon paper with circulation of 45,000.
Read by Budapest bourgeoisie and Jewish middle class, oppositional, liberal.
Editor: Karoly Rassay.

Magyarország

Evening paper with circulation of circa 25,000, caters to middle class and to industrialists and businessmen, in general a supporter of the government and the Horthy Regime.
The most influential editorial writer is Pál Szvatko.

(The following two newspapers are published by the same Publishing House and follow the same line of policy:

Pesti Napló, a morning paper.

Pest (former "Az Est"), a noon paper.

Magyar Nemzet

Morning paper
Independent paper, the favorite paper of liberal intellectuals, represented ideas of popular front, but, in recent times, has become more friendly to the government, probably under the influence of Szekfü, a well-known nationalist and Catholic historian.
Nominal owner: Szekfü, the real owners are Baron Kornfeld and Frances Chorin, sons-in-law of Manfred Weiss, founder of largest industrial concern in Hungary (Munitions, planes, etc.).
Editor: Istvan Barankovics.

(The same political line is followed by

A Mai Nap, a late morning paper, circulated in streets of Budapest.)

Nemzeti Ujság

Morning paper with circulation of 30,000.
The leading Catholic newspaper, read by aristocracy and Catholic middle class, supporter of government, legitimist, anti-Semetic.
Editor: Ladislaus Tóth.

(The same Publishing House publishes

Uj Nemzedék, a noon paper with a circulation of 60,000, which follows the same political line as Nemzeti Ujsag.)

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Népszava

Morning paper with circulation of more than 80,000.
The newspaper of the Social Democratic Party, mainly read by workers; oppositional paper, vehemently anti-Nazi and anti-German.
Tries to extend its influence over all liberal groups and has opened its pages to liberal writers and representatives of the Small Holders' Party.
Directed by Arpad Szakasits.

3 Orai Ujsag

Afternoon paper with circulation of 40,000.
Conservative, but more and more oppositional.
Owner: Count Istvan Bethlen.
Editor: Count Andreas Bethlen, eldest son of Count Istvan Bethlen.

Pester Lloyd

Daily (morning and evening) with circulation of 30,000.
Written in German.
Organ of higher bourgeoisie and capitalists.
Liberal in domestic policy, but extremely pro-German in foreign affairs, frequently mouthpiece of Foreign Office.
President: Aurel Egry.
Responsible Editor: György Kecskemeti.
Influential editorial writer: György Ottlik.

Posti Hirlap

Daily paper with circulation of 100,000 (Sunday edition of 140,000).
Read over the whole country, particularly by smaller officials and lower bourgeoisie.
In general supporter of government, strongly nationalistic and revisionist and has followed, therefore, a pro-German line in foreign affairs, but not pro-Nazi in home affairs.
Owner and directing editor: Otto Légrady.

Uj Magyarsag

Morning paper with circulation of 40,000.
Caters to nationalistic middle class.
Represents the pro-German right wing of the government party and is organ of Minister of Propaganda Antal.
Editor: Istvan Milotay.
Editor for Foreign Affairs: Ferenc Rajniss.

Other newspapers are:

Budapesti Hirlap, morning paper with circulation of 25,000, pro-Government.

Friss Ujsag, read by peasants and lower middle class, unpolitical.

Függetlenség, morning and evening paper with circulation of 30,000, extremely right-wing, controlled by government, sensationalist.

Kis Ujsag, organ of the Small Holders' Party and mouthpiece of Peasant Union, oppositional.

Magyar Hirlap, morning paper with circulation of 20,000, read by intellectuals and Jewish Middle class.

Magyarság, organ of Arrow-Cross party, Nazi and pro-German.

Magyarsag Utja, organ of Arrow-Cross Party under Szálasi.

Őszetartas, a new Nazi "Arrow-Cross Party" paper, replaced the permanently banned Pesti Ujsag.

Ujsag, morning paper with circulation of 25,000, liberal and democratic, editor Bajcsy Zsilinszky, influential parliamentarian.

Hétfő)
Hétfő Reggel) Monday papers
Független Magyarország)

Ellenzék, the most important paper issued in Transylvania, editor: Zathurecky, Gyula

Budapesti Közlöny, Official Gazette.

Minorities have their own newspapers. Those for Serbs, Croats and Slovaks are conducted by the government. The organ of the racial Germans ("Deutscher Volksbund"), the "Deutsche Zeitung" is a wild Nazi paper.

Periodicals and Weeklies:

Egyedül Vagyunk, pro-Nazi weekly under Imredy's influence.

Magyar Szemle, a political and economic monthly review, high level, conservative, not Nazi. Chairman of Editorial Board: Count Istvan Bethlen.

Szabad Szó, liberal; editor: Bajcsy Zsilinszky and Imre Kovács.

Radio:

The Hungarian Broadcasting Company, though officially an independent monopoly, is now under strict political control of the Ministry of Propaganda, and its director, Antal Náray, is also President of the Hungarian Telegraph Bureau, an official agency.

According to the official statistics the number of license-holders or subscribers rose from 748,000 to 822,000 between March, 1942, and March, 1943. At the beginning of 1942 the Post Office issued a questionnaire to all subscribers as to listening habits. The working up of the answers took 15 months and was published in March 1943. The answers show that 76.2 percent of the listeners are adults; 14.3 are between 11 and 18 years of age, and 9.5 percent are under the age of 10; 44.7 percent listen to Budapest transmissions two hours a day at the most, 33.6 percent 2-4 hours, and the rest still longer; 52.5 percent listen in between 9-10 p.m., 48.5 percent between 8-9 p.m., 45.2 percent between 7-8 a.m., 44.1 percent between 7-8 p.m., and 40.5 percent between 12 and 2 p.m.; after 10 p.m. only 20.4 percent of the subscribers listen in. 43.7 percent reported listening to foreign broadcasts regularly and the real proportion is probably even higher.

In 1941, 40.3 percent of all sets were two-valve sets, 28.3 percent three-valve sets, 11.7 percent four-valve sets, 6.7 percent one-valve sets, and 6.2 percent more than four-valve sets, and only 6.3 crystal sets. The latter can receive only local stations. This means that probably 88 percent of subscribers having two or more valve sets are able to listen to strong medium wave stations located outside the country. Furthermore, 52.6 percent of the sets were able to receive short, medium and long-wave transmissions.

The following are the Hungarian broadcasting stations:

Name of Station	Location	Wave Length	Frequency	Power Kw.
Budapest I	15 kilometres south - southwest of Budapest	549.5	546	120
Budapest II	15 kilometres south-southwest of Budapest	288.5	1040	18
Nyiregyháza	205 kilometres northeast of Budapest	267.4	1122	6.25

Cluj (Kolozsvár)	In Transylvania, 365 Kilometers south-east of Budapest	267.4	1122	1.25
Miskolc	148 kilometers north-east of Budapest	259.1	1158	1.25
Magyaróvár	30 kilometres south-east of Bratislava	227.1	1321	1.25
Košice (Kassa)	210 kilometers north-east of Budapest	208.6	1438	6.25
Pécs	120 kilometers south - south-west of Budapest	204.8	1465	1.25
		Short wave		
Budapest	52 kilometers west -	34.68	8650	20
(Székesfehérvar)	south-west of Budapest	45.05	66.60	20

In 1941, it was claimed that the proportion of illiterates among the Hungarian population had declined to 4%.

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